



**INSTITUTE FOR ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH**

6935 Laurel Avenue, Suite 201  
Takoma Park, MD 20912

Phone: (301) 270-5500  
FAX: (301) 270-3029  
e-mail: [ieer@ieer.org](mailto:ieer@ieer.org)  
<http://www.ieer.org>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For further information contact: Arjun Makhijani, 301-270-5500

**P R E S S   R E L E A S E**

**Independent Institute in the United States Appointed to Review French Research Program on Geologic Disposal of High Level Radioactive Waste**

**Evaluation Will Make Recommendations to Official Local Oversight Body on Possible Improvements to Research Program**

---

*Takoma Park, Maryland, June 10, 2003:* The Institute for Energy and Environmental Research (IEER), based in Takoma Park, Maryland, has been retained to evaluate the repository research program at Bure in eastern France being conducted by the Agence nationale pour la gestion des déchets radioactifs (ANDRA), which is the French agency responsible for nuclear waste management. The Bure site may be used as a geologic repository for French high-level nuclear waste.

Under French law, the local oversight committee, the Comité Local d'Information et de Suivi (CLIS), has the power to commission such an independent evaluation. It is composed of elected officials as well as non-governmental stakeholders, such as trade unions and agricultural, environmental, and industrial associations from the region in eastern France where the repository research is being carried out, which includes the Meuse and Haute-Marne départements and the regions of Lorraine and Champagne-Ardenne.

The President of IEER, Dr. Arjun Makhijani, will lead the IEER team. Dr. Makhijani has authored and co-authored many articles and research studies on the problem of nuclear waste management, including the issue of repository research. He has served on the Radiation Advisory Committee of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and on other official committees that have responsibility for nuclear waste management and clean-up standards.

"It is an honor for IEER to have been selected to provide this evaluation to the CLIS and the people of the region where Bure, the site of the repository research is located," said Dr. Makhijani. "I look forward to working with the staff and members of the CLIS, with ANDRA scientists, and others to provide a thorough review and sound recommendations for the Bure repository research project. IEER has assembled a terrific, world-class team for the job."

The goals of the project are to:

- evaluate the adequacy and scientific thoroughness of the research program of ANDRA relative to best scientific practices, to ANDRA's own research goals and performance criteria, and to repository and radiological standards prevailing in France;
- identify any gaps and deficiencies that may exist in ANDRA's research program;
- propose modifications to ANDRA's methodological approach, planned experiments, approach to site construction and retrievability, and other issues relating to geologic isolation;
- recommend additional research to complement ANDRA's program and ensure its completeness.

Other members of IEER's international team are (asterisk means institutions are for identification only):

- Dr. Jaak J.K. Daemen (rock mechanics), University of Nevada at Reno\*
- Dr. George J. Danko (thermal response), University of Nevada at Reno\*
- Dr. Rodney Ewing (engineered barriers and near field geology), University of Michigan, Ann Arbor\*
- Dr. Detlef Appel (hydrogeology), independent consultant
- Dr. Gerhard Jentzsch (seismology), Institute for Geosciences, University of Jena\*
- Dr. Yuri Dublyansky (geochemistry and mineralogy), Fluid Inclusion Laboratory, Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences\*
- Annie Makhijani (radiochemistry, French language editor, and project coordinator), Institute for Energy and Environmental Research

"Research on geologic isolation, including engineered barriers and geologic repository settings, presents some of the greatest scientific and engineering challenges in the history of technology because it requires estimation for times far into the future with considerable confidence," said Dr. Makhijani. "I am committed to provide the CLIS and the people of the region a set of recommendations, which, if implemented, will provide the scientific basis for a well-informed, democratic decision on the suitability of the site and the proposed engineered barriers for the purpose of geologic isolation."

The IEER team will visit the Bure site in eastern France in early July 2003. IEER's final report, with recommendations, will be submitted to the CLIS in March 2004.